



2008.12.18. Priority Prisoner List

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The list below details 13 political prisoners whose cases we believe to be a priority. All but four individuals are associated with the 2008 spring uprising.

Jigme (M), monk, 42

Chinese Characters: 晋美

Pinyin Name: Jinmei

There are fears for the safety of a senior monk, Jigme Gyatso (or Guri), whose account of a period in detention following the March protests in his monastery, Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) was videoed and uploaded on Youtube. Jigme Gyatso (also known under the honorific 'Akhu' Jigme), deputy director of his monastery's 'Democratic Management Committee' and Director of Labrang's Vocational School, was taken from his monk's cell at Labrang last Tuesday (November 4) by around 70 police and is now being held in Lanzhou, the provincial capital of Gansu province. Images obtained by ICT show 42-year old Jigme in hospital following torture following his period of detention from March 22. The images can be viewed online at <http://savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1388>.

Labrang monk Jigme Gyatso, who gave an authoritative account of his earlier detention on a video in which he shows his face and gives his full identity, is now being held in an unknown location in Lanzhou. Labrang monastery is in Sangchu county (Chinese: Xiahe), Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) TAP, Gansu province. It is Jigme Gyatso's third detention, and there are serious fears for his welfare after he endured severe torture during a 42-day period of imprisonment from March 22. He was released from this period of detention under conditions of '*qubao housheng*', which means that trial and charges are pending or delayed.

Jigme Gyatso had not taken part in the protests at Labrang on March 14 and 15, but the authorities suspected him of being a ring-leader. In a video account later broadcast by VOA and posted onto Youtube – ICT has a transcript in English which can be viewed online at: <http://savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1388> – Jigme described his detention and torture in custody. (The video can be seen at <http://www.highpeakspureearth.com/2008/09/voa-video-testimony-of-labrang-monk.html>). Jigme's testimony included details on prison conditions for monks from Labrang monastery that protested in front of a delegation of foreign journalists on April 10 (See ICT report: 'Monks reveal concerns about Chinese allegations on weapons caches, views on Olympics', <http://www.savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1290>), "Monks who spoke to some reporters were beaten with batons and had their legs broken; on some, they used electric batons on their heads and in their mouths - the electric baton affected their brains and some have become disabled...driven to a type of insanity."

Norzin Wangmo (F), layperson, 30s

Chinese Characters: (Wangmo) 旺姆(音)

Pinyin name: Wangmu

Sentence: 5 years

Norzin Wangmo, a female cadre, was sentenced to five years in prison for passing on news through the phone and internet about the situation in Tibet to the outside world, according to two sources including the Tibetan government in exile. Norzin Wangmo, from Ngaba Trochu county of Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, was convicted on November 3; exact details of the charges against her are not known. She was reportedly tortured following her detention in April.

Dragkar Nuns (3), Kardze TAP

Sangye Lhamo (F), nun, 26

Chinese Characters: 桑杰拉姆(音)

Pinyin Name: Sangjie Lamu

Tsewang Kando (F), nun, 38

Chinese Characters: 次旺康卓(音)

Pinyin Name: Ciwang Kangzhuo

Yeshi Lhadon (F), nun, 24

Chinese Characters: 益西拉珍(音)

Pinyin Name: Yixi Lazhen

- All from a related case in Kardze county

Details: Sangye Lhamo, a 26 year old nun from Serchuteng township, Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) county, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, was detained on May 28 along with two other nuns from Dragkar nunnery in Kardze, Tsewang Kando, 38, also from Serchuteng township, and Yeshi Lhadon, 24, from Tsozhi village, Kardze county. The three were detained following a peaceful demonstration in the town market square where they distributed leaflets. The three nuns are currently being held in Kardze town and have been denied family visitation, according to recent reports received from relatives. An image of Sangye Lhamo is available and can be viewed on p. 64 of ICT's report, *Tibet at a Turning Point*:

<http://www.savetibet.org/documents/document.php?id=258>. An image of Yeshi Lhadon can be viewed on p. 118.

Name: Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche (M), tulku (reincarnate lama)

Chinese Characters: 瀑布次仁(音)

Pinyin Name: Pubu Ciren

Details: Phurbu Rinpoche is a senior lama at Trehor Kardze monastery and head of Pangri nunnery in Kardze TAP, Sichuan province. He was detained on May 18 or 19 in connection with a peaceful protest by 55 Pangri nuns on May 14 in which they shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, and the Dalai Lama's long life. The nuns were detained en route and many beaten severely. Phurbu Rinpoche is a deeply respected local figure known for his work in the local community. There is no confirmation of any trial or sentence for Phurbu Rinpoche. Information about his whereabouts is unknown. (Image of Phurbu Rinpoche, p. 71, *Tibet at a Turning Point*, <http://www.savetibet.org/documents/document.php?id=258>)

Name: Kunchok (M), 16

Chinese Characters: 贡觉(音)

Pinyin Name: Gongjue

Sentence: 12 years (confirmation needed) on June 15, 2008

Details: According to information received by ICT, a 16-year old minor, Kunchok, from Machu (Chinese: Maqu) county, Kanlho TAP, Gansu province, was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Although the charges cannot be confirmed, sources in the area indicate that his offense was 'political' and likely to be due to involvement in the Machu protest on March 16. Kunchok, who is believed to be an orphan, was reportedly detained on April 11 and asked to pay a large fine of up to 15,000 *yuan* (US \$2195), which he was unable to afford. According to the same account, even after some Tibetans found the money to pay his fine, he was not released, and was sentenced on June 15.

Name: Dondrub Wangchen (M), filmmaker, 33

Chinese characters: 顿珠旺钦(音)

Pinyin name: Dunzhu Wangqin

Details: Tibetan film-makers Dondrub Wangchen and Jigme Gyatso were detained in March 2008, soon after they completed filming a documentary (*Leaving Fear Behind*) featuring Tibetans in a Tibetan area of Qinghai expressing their views on the Dalai Lama, the Olympic Games, and Chinese laws. Police detained filmmaker Dondrub Wangchen on March 26 in Kawasumdo (Tongde) county, Tsolho (Hainan) TAP, Qinghai province, and filmmaker's assistant Jigme Gyatso, a Labrang (Xiahe) Tashikhyil monk, on March 23 in Linxia city, Gansu province. The men filmed more than 100 Tibetans, most of whom chose to speak on camera without concealing their identities. The film was smuggled out of China prior to the film makers' detention. The documentary, featuring 20 of the Tibetans, was screened in August 2008. Police held Dondrub Wangchen for three months at Ershilipu detention center, near Xining city, and then in a hotel. No information about his place of detention after July or criminal charges, if any, against him is available.

Jigme Gyatso (also known as Golog Jigme), who filmed interviews for a documentary, 'Leaving Fear Behind', returned to his monastery on October 15 after being released under conditions of qubao housheng. Jigme Gyatso had been held in Kachu (Chinese: Linxia), Gansu, and was released possibly pending further investigation.

The film, 'Leaving Fear Behind', can be viewed in its entirety (approx 25 minutes) at <http://woeser.middle-way.net/2008/09/leaving-fear-behind.html>

Name: Tsering Tsomo (F), nun, 27

Chinese Characters: 次仁措姆(音)

Pinyin Name: Ciren Cuomu

Sentence: 2 years

Details: On June 8, 2008, public security officials in the seat of Drango (Luhuo) county, Kardze (Ganzi) TAP, Sichuan province, beat and detained a nun who staged a peaceful solo protest. At approximately 9:00 AM, nun Tsering Tsomo (or Tsering Tso), aged 27, of Samtenling Nunnery (Watag Nunnery) began distributing leaflets and shouting slogans calling for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. Security officials kicked, punched, and beat her with rods before taking her to the county detention center, according to a report by the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) (<http://www.tchrd.org/press/2008/pr20080609.html>). Later the same day, more than 200 Samtenling nuns attempted to march to the county government offices to protest Tsering Tsomo's detention, but security forces allegedly blocked the nuns and then beat and detained 'scores' of them. No information is available about their current whereabouts. The Luhuo County People's Court later sentenced Tsering Tsomo to two years in prison; charges are not known.

Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche (or Jigme Tenzin Nyima Rinpoche) (M), 42

Chinese characters: 晋美且增尼玛(音), 其美丹增尼玛

Pinyin Name: Jinmei Danzeng Nima

Sentence: Life commuted to fixed term, then reduced by one year. Concern for his health

Details: Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche (or Jigme Tenzin Nyima), the head of the former Gyatso children's school in Lhasa, was arrested in August 1999. Bangri Rinpoche, who is in his early forties, is from Nangchen (Nangqian) county, Jyekundo (Yushu) TAP, Qinghai province. In the mid-1990s he became involved in the Gyatso children's home and school, a privately-funded orphanage and school for Tibetan children, after he married the founder, Nyima Choedron, a former nun. On August 26, 1999, Tashi Tsering, a builder engaged in a contract with them, failed in an attempt to blow himself up as he tried to replace a Chinese flag with a Tibetan flag in front of the Potala Palace. Hours later, the Public Security Bureau detained the Rinpoche and Nyima Choedron, and closed the home. Chinese officials have said that the home's operators were sentenced to imprisonment on charges of 'splittism'. They were sent to Drapchi (TAR Prison) in Lhasa. Following the closure of the school, all the staff were arrested and imprisoned for varying periods, and many of the children were thrown out onto the streets following interrogation by police.

There are severe concerns for Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche's health. A reliable report received by ICT states that he had been hospitalized at least once due to possible intestinal illness and that he is in a very weak state. Bangri Tsamtrul Rinpoche has now been transferred from Drapchi to the new prison in Chushur (Chinese: Qushui) county south-west of Lhasa. Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche's life sentence for 'splittism' was commuted to 19 years on July 31, 2003, and he was granted a year's reduction on November 17, 2005, with his sentence now due to expire on July 30, 2021.

Jigme Gyatso (M), businessman, 47

Chinese characters: 晋美江村(音), 其美江村, 吉美加措

Pinyin Name: Jinmei Jiacao

Sentence: 15 years plus a three year extension

Details: Sentence extended due to peaceful protest in prison; fear for safety due to torture following UN Special Rapporteur's visit. Jigme Gyatso's 15-year sentence was extended by three years after he shouted 'long live the Dalai Lama' and pro-independence slogans while in detention in May 2004. Jigme Gyatso, who is being held in Chushur (Chinese: Qushui) prison is reportedly suffering from very poor health as a result of beatings during detention.

Jigme Gyatso, born in 1961 in Sangchu (Xiahe) county, Kanlho (Gannan) TAP in Gansu province, spent several years in Ganden Monastery near Lhasa, traveled to India in the mid-1980s, and later opened a restaurant in Lhasa's well-known Barkor neighborhood. According to a report by TCHRD, Jigme Gyatso distributed pro-independence leaflets and put up posters while he was at Ganden. In 1992, he established a group named the 'Association of Tibetan Freedom Movements.' He was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for counter-revolution in 1996. According to reports received by ICT, on one occasion in 1998, a group of security officials from Gansu province entered Jigme Gyatso's cell in Drapchi prison and beat him unconscious.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Dr Manfred Nowak, was able to speak to Jigme Gyatso during a visit to Chushur in 2005. Jigme Gyatso apparently said that he had received a two-year sentence extension in May 2004 after shouting pro-independence slogans. The San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation has since seen several Chinese government responses that refer to a three-year sentence extension for 'inciting splittism' and a new release date of March 30, 2014. The reason for the discrepancy in the reporting is unclear, but there are strong indications that the reports of the three-year extension are in fact accurate. Jigme Gyatso was apparently severely tortured following the visit of the Rapporteur, according to information received by ICT.

A report on Jigme Gyatso's sentence extension and welfare, including a translation of his sentencing document, can be found at <http://www.savetibet.org/news/newsitem.php?id=1065>.

Name: Tenzin Delek Rinpoche or Trulku Tenzin Delek (M), monk, 58

Chinese characters: 阿安扎西

Pinyin Name: A'an Zhaxi

Sentence: Death sentence commuted to life

Details: Tenzin Delek, born in 1950 in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, was recognized by the Dalai Lama as a reincarnate lama in the 1980s. Detained on April 7, 2002, he and Lobsang Dondrub (Luorang Dengzhu) were convicted at a closed trial on November 29 2002 on charges of exploding bombs and scattering separatist leaflets. Official sources report that the case involved state secrets. No evidence has been made public. Lobsang Dondrub is portrayed as the bomber, Tenzin Delek as conspirator. They were sentenced to death on December 2. Tenzin Delek received a two-year reprieve and appealed. The Sichuan Higher People's Court approved Lobsang Dondrub's execution and rejected Tenzin Delek's appeal on January 26, 2003. Tenzin Delek's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on January 26, 2005. He is imprisoned in Chuandong Prison, Sichuan and has apparently been treated for heart disease. The case has stirred international controversy for its procedural violations and lack of transparency. Tenzin Delek was well-known and respected in his home area for his work building monasteries and providing education for children in remote rural areas and his arrest is likely to have been for political reasons, in order to curb monastic influence and religious expression.

Name: Runggye Adak (M), herder, 52

Chinese Characters: 荣吉阿扎(音)

Pinyin Name: Rongji Azha

Sentence: 8 years on charges of 'inciting to split the country'

Details: Security officials detained 52 year-old Tibetan nomad Runggye Adak on August 1, 2007, at a horse-racing festival in Litang county, Kardze (Ganzi) TAP, Sichuan province. Runggye Adak climbed onto a stage where officials were due to speak and, according to the reports, shouted slogans calling for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, freedom of religion, the releases of Gedun Choekyi Nyima (the Panchen Lama identified by the Dalai Lama) and Tenzin Delek Rinpoche (see above), and for Tibetan independence. According to a Xinhua report, Runggye Adak intended to "separate the country and harm national unity." The Kardze Intermediate People's Court convicted him on October 29 on charges of subverting state power and inciting splittism, according to RFA. Xinhua reported that the court sentenced him on November 20 to 8 years in prison for inciting splittism. Xinhua also reported that the Kardze Intermediate People's Court sentenced Kunkhyen and Runggye Adak's nephew Adrug Lupoe on November 20 to 9 years and 10 years imprisonment respectively on charges of espionage and inciting splittism. A fourth Tibetan, Jarib Lothog, was sentenced to three years in prison linked to the same case.

It is significant that the two Tibetans allegedly reporting on the event were sentenced to longer terms than the perpetrator, and may be intended to convey an intimidating signal to Tibetans about passing on news about unrest or dissent to the outside world.